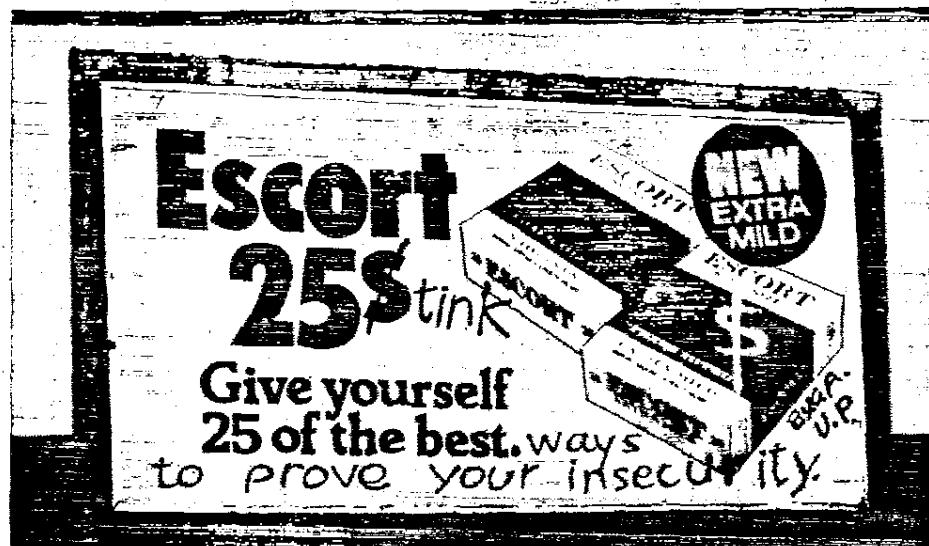


FRONTLINES



Some Australian judges and police look tolerantly on such vandalism; the vandals are often doctors.

Healthy Signs Down Under

Australians who doctor billboards by night can often be found wielding scalpels by day—that is, they can if they're members of BUGA UP. Billboard-Utilising Graffitists Against Unhealthy Promotions is an illegal movement with the long-term goal of banishing cigarette and alcohol advertisements down under. For now, the sprayers hope to make the cost of maintaining tobacco billboards so prohibitive that sponsors will abandon them.

The movement is weighted with medical personnel because it grew out of a successful above-ground health-workers campaign called MOP UP—Movement Opposed to the Promotion of Unhealthy Products.

Membership is gained merely by picking up a spray can and, when done, signing the group's increasingly well-known initials.

Response to the vandals from the courts, media and the public has been largely sympathetic; BUGA-UPers have been invited to give antismoking talks in schools, with principals claiming that the image

of a nonsmoker who is an outlaw appeals to kids.

One graffitist interviewed in an Australian medical magazine claims that police officers involved in a fitness and stop-smoking campaign even gave him tips on avoiding future arrests.

Although members have done time in "gaol," judges have often been moved by the pleas of doctors, backed by parents and teachers, who claim the undefaced billboards are recruiting teen-agers to smoking.

So far, the most popular graffiti have included "Come to Cancer Country" (on Marlboro posters) and "No More Fun When Cancer Rots Your Lung." Members also try to demystify advertising messages, annotating billboards with comments on appeals to virility, impotence or emasculation fears and masturbation fantasies. Even when the message is mundane, the sprayers agree that the change forces viewers to eye the advertisements more critically.

The Outdoor Advertising Association admits that graffitists have been successful,

and it is lobbying for legislation that would slap BUGA-UPers with mandatory, significant jail terms. Billboard attackers, meanwhile, estimate that they are costing

advertisers about a quarter of a million dollars a year.

BUGA UP is trying to mobilize their tacit supporters into becoming active participants; old hands offer this advice to novices:

"When on the job, a phantom painter carries three spray cans: black, red and chrome. . . . It doesn't take long to be able to write quickly whilst avoiding spelling errors, the embarrassment of any graffitist. . . . Sometimes it is possible to climb up the back of the billboard structure and work from the top; upside-down writing with a spray can is an experience that has few comparisons."

"Billboards altered in the city have a life span of between one day and six weeks, [stay] on government property for three or four weeks, and those in the country last for months."

have jumped onto the "Christian Weight Watchers" bandwagon.

The program is commonly known not as "Stigmatized Flesh" but as "3-D"—Diet, Discipline and Discipleship.

Carol Showalter, founder of the Rochester, New York-based group, claims that a Christian should be physically fit and spiritually hardy.

As surrogate scripture, 3-Ders have used a *Better Homes and Gardens* text, *Eat and Stay Slim*. Meetings generally include a weigh-in, a short gabfest centering on dieting and the Bible and, of course, a David Stockman-style communal prayer by dieters to cut fat and waste from their midst.



To Diet For Your Sins

Do you love Jesus, but not enough to stay on a diet?" That's the latest test of faith in the more than 4,000 churches across the nation that